

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS ANNUAL REPORT 2016

“Advocating for Veterans & Their Families”



Daniel J. Bullis, *Chairman*

Randy Stone, *Vice-Chairman*

Isiah Leggett, *County Executive*



MEMBERSHIP LIST 2015 - 2016

VETERANS REPRESENTATIVES

Henry Bockman, Veteran
 Daniel Bullis, Disabled American Veterans
 James Campbell, Military Officers Association of America
 Octavia Dixon, Veterans of Foreign Wars
 Ron Drach, Veteran
 Elizabeth (Jane) McCarthy, American Legion
 Wayne Miller, Disabled American Veterans
 Randy Stone, American Legion

NON-VOTING CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Austin Morris, Office of Congressman Chris Van Hollen

GENERAL PUBLIC MEMBERS

Dan Bolling
 Marek Posard - Resigned
 Vacancy
 Vacancy

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Michael L. Subin, Office of the County Executive
 Joanna L. Starling, Montgomery College
 Vacancy - Department of Health & Human Services
 Vacancy - Department of Economic Development

STAFF

Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager
 Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL



COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

November 1, 2016

Via Letter of Transmittal Electronically to:

The Honorable Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive

The Honorable Nancy Floreen, President, Montgomery County Council

Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

The Commission on Veterans Affairs is pleased to present a summary of its activities for the past year. We continue to advise and consult with you on issues of concern to the estimated 42,000 Veterans, and their families, who live in the County. Under your leadership and with your support, the Commission is mandated to research, assemble, analyze and disseminate information that will assist in meeting the needs of Veterans and their families.

Since 2009, the Commission had been advocating along with Congressman Van Hollen's and Senator Ben Cardin's office to have the Veterans Administration (VA) open a VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in the County. On September 19, 2016 we were pleased to be part of a "Golden Hammer" event put on by the District of Columbia VA Medical Center to mark the beginning of the build out of this clinic to be located at 15810 Gaither Road, Rockville, MD. At this time we pay tribute in memory of Gregory Hamilton, Navy, Vietnam Veteran, who met with County Executive Isiah Leggett about 10 years ago and requested that he establish a Commission on Veterans Affairs to work on establishing a CBOC.

We continue to encourage cooperation, coordination and collaboration among all agencies and non-profits that serve Veterans so that our community works together to honor and provide the best services possible to Veterans and their families. We have established a close relationship with Serving Together which is a resource and referral source for Veterans and their families. The Office of Human Resource's merit hiring initiatives has led to as of October 20, 2016 the hiring of 191 Veterans, including 13 who have a disability.

We are pleased with the County's efforts to end homelessness amongst Veterans and to assist in obtaining permanent housings with the Zero:16 campaign. We are working to increase outreach to the general Veteran population regarding programs, services and enrollment in VA Health Benefits. We are supporting Veterans through our Veterans Education Partnership which includes Montgomery College Combat to College, Universities at Shady Grove and the University of Maryland Terp Vets.

We wish to recognize and give our personal thanks to all Commissioners, the many community members, and the agency staff who participate in our meetings for their commitment and dedication. We would like to acknowledge DHHS Director Uma Ahluwalia for her role in meeting with the Boards, Commissions and Committees to keep us informed of important health and human services issues, Dr. Jay Kenney, Chief, Aging and Disability Services, Betsy Tolbert Luecking, Community Outreach Manager, and Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist, for their outstanding support in providing the Commission with the resources needed to carry out our mission. This report is the result of our combined efforts.

It has been a pleasure to work with you and members of the Commission during our term of service. We are confident that you will continue to support the Commission's efforts to enhance the lives of our Veterans. Our meetings are open to the public, and we invite you to join us for any meeting.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Bullis, Chairman



Randy Stone, Vice-Chairman

VA STRENGTHENS COMMITMENT TO COUNTY VETERANS ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Press Release - September 16, 2016

Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett will be joined by County, State, and Federal officials for the official ceremony to redevelop space for a new County Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). The ceremony will be held Monday, September 19, 2016 at 10:30 a.m. at 15810 Gaither Drive in Gaithersburg.

It will be the first Department of Veterans Affairs community clinic in Montgomery County offering health care services to the more than 42,000 Veterans living in the area.

The newly renovated building space will offer 11,600 square feet with room for primary-care and mental-health clinics as well as space for tele-health, patient education, hearing aid fittings and specialty care.

Expanding health care access to Veterans in Maryland is a high priority for the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center, which operates five other community clinics in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia.

The CBOC is scheduled to open in December 2017 and will be a welcomed addition for Veterans in the community. The County's CBOC will have ample parking and is in close proximity to the Shady Grove Metro Station and Ride On bus #43.



Washington DC VAMC • Montgomery County CBOC Construction Kickoff

Program of Events

- 10:30 Welcome - Captain Michael Subin, USN, Retired, *Master of Ceremony*
- 10:35 Opening Remarks - Mr. Brian A. Hawkins, Medical Center Director
- 10:40 The Honorable Benjamin Cardin, Senator
- 10:45 The Honorable Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., Congressman
- 10:55 The Honorable John Sarbanes, Congressman
- 11:00 Mr. Joseph A. Williams, Jr., Network Director, VISN 5
- 11:05 Mr. George W. Owings III, Secretary of Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
- 11:10 Mr. Isiah (Ike) Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
- 11:15 "What the MoCo CBOC Means and How It Benefits Local Veterans"
Mr. Dan Bullis, Chairman, Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs
- 11:20 Golden Hammer Ceremony

VA STRENGTHENS COMMITMENT TO COUNTY VETERANS ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC



From left to right: Dan Bullis, Chairman, Commission on Veterans Affairs; Joe Williams, VISN 5 Network Director; Brian Hawkins, DC VA Medical Center Director; Secretary George W. Owings III, Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs; Congressman Christopher Van Hollen; County Executive Isiah Leggett; Senator John Sarbanes; Dr. Ross Fletcher, Chief of Staff Emeritus, DC VA Medical Center; and Sidney Katz, Member, Montgomery County Council.



Councilmember Sidney Katz and Mike Subin, Special Assistant to the County Executive and Commissioner



County Executive Isiah Leggett and Dan Bullis, Chairman, Commission on Veterans Affairs

Photos courtesy of Office of Public Information - David Jeo

HOW TO ENROLL IN VA HEALTHCARE

There are 42,000 Veterans living in the County and only an estimated 8,000 are enrolled in the VA Healthcare system. Given that the County will be having its first Community Based Outpatient Clinic in 2017, the Commission is encouraging Veterans to enroll now. The very first step in obtaining access to your VA Health Benefits is to apply for enrollment. Effective immediately, Veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, can complete applications for enrollment in VA health care by telephone without the need for a signed paper application. All other Veterans may apply by phone starting July 5, 2016.

When Veterans choose to enroll, VA offers an enhancement to their enrollment experience through "Welcome to VA" (W2VA). W2VA enhances communication by reaching out to newly enrolled Veterans through personal phone calls upon enrollment, providing assistance with health care inquiries and assisting with their initial appointment at their preferred VA healthcare facility. In addition, VA sends each new enrollee an introductory letter and personalized Veterans Health Benefits Handbook in the mail.

For more information about the Veterans Health Benefits Handbook, visit www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/vhbh/index.asp.

Here are the convenient ways to apply for enrollment:

By Telephone

The telephone application option is a more convenient way to apply for enrollment, and eliminates the need for a signed paper application.

- VA staff members will collect the needed information and process the enrollment application for an enrollment determination.
- To apply, call 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Mon-Fri between 8 am and 8 pm, EST.

Apply in Person

You may apply in person at your local VA health care facility.

- Complete the healthcare application online.
- For more information about the application process, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply/application_process.asp.
- You will also receive information about the appeals process, if you do not agree with the enrollment decision.

By Mail

Pick up an application at your local VA or download, print, and fill out the 10-10EZ, Application for Health Care.

Complete the application (be sure to sign it) and mail to:

Health Eligibility Center
2957 Clairmont Road, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30329-1647

Apply Online

Fill out the application online and electronically submit it to VA for processing. No need for additional documents to verify military service. If you were recently discharged, we will get your military information for you.

- To complete the healthcare application, visit www.vets.gov/healthcare/apply.
- Once you complete the application, you may submit your application online.
- You will immediately receive a confirmation message notifying you that your application has been received.
- A signature is not required for online registration.
- For more information about the application process, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply/application_process.asp.
- You will also receive information about the appeals process, if you do not agree with the enrollment decision.

Obtaining an Appointment:

You may request a doctor's appointment when you apply for enrollment by checking 'yes' to the question asking if you want an appointment on the application. An appointment will be made with a VA doctor or provider and you will be notified via mail of the appointment. If you need health care before your scheduled appointment, you may contact the Enrollment Coordinator, Urgent Care Clinic or the Emergency Room at your local VA.

Required Signature

When you apply in person or by mail, you or the person acting as your Power of Attorney must sign and date the form. If your Power of Attorney signs and dates the form you must submit a copy of the Power of Attorney with the form. If you sign with an "X", then two people that you know must witness you as you sign the form. They must also sign and print their names on the form.

MIKE LOVE, FOUNDER OF THE BEACH BOYS, SHARES MESSAGE OF HEALING WITH COMMISSION

Mike Love, Founding Member of the Beach Boys, gave a message of healing to local Veterans on May 31, 2016 by sharing his experience with Transcendental Meditation (TM). He was in town over Memorial Day weekend to headline a PBS Concert on the lawn of the Capitol. Former U.S. Senator Max Cleland, a U.S. Army Vietnam Veteran, was the facilitator of having him contact the Commission to meet with local Veterans. Commissioners Bill Gray, Past Chair, and Wayne Miller, Team Leader, Silver Spring Vet Center, joined him in sharing their experience with TM as well. Veterans of all branches and members of the general public were welcome and encouraged to attend. The Commission sponsored the event and it was by the American Legion Hall, Post 41, in Silver Spring. There were over 50 people in attendance.



From left to right: Bill Gray, Mike Love and Wayne Miller



COUNCILMEMBER GEORGE LEVENTHAL ANNOUNCES THAT MONTGOMERY COUNTY EFFECTIVELY ENDS VETERANS HOMELESSNESS

Press Release: Friday, December 18, 2015

Montgomery County Councilmember George Leventhal, who serves as chair of the Council's Health and Human Services Committee, at 11 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 21, will host a press conference at the Council Office Building in Rockville in the third floor conference room announcing that \$500,000 in funding appropriated by the Council was used to house 18 homeless Veterans and helped the County to provide housing for every identifiable homeless Veteran. The County has also submitted certification requests to the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and the Zero 2016 Campaign, and Councilmember Leventhal anticipates an announcement about the findings in the coming days.

Councilmember Leventhal will be joined by Councilmembers Craig Rice and Sidney Katz; Susie Sinclair-Smith, executive director, Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless; Susan Kirk, executive director, Bethesda Cares; Uma Ahluwalia, director, Department of Health and Human Services. Other invited guests include: Veterans who now have stable housing; Nan Roman, president and CEO, National Alliance to End Homelessness; Matthew Doherty, executive director, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness; and Stacy Spann, executive director, Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County.

The County committed to ending homelessness for Veterans by setting a goal to move 58 Veterans experiencing homelessness into permanent housing by December 31, 2015. So far this year, the County has provided housing for 53 Veterans. By the end of the year, 58 Veteran households will have housing or a permanent housing plan.

"Housing every identifiable homeless Veteran in Montgomery County has always been and continues to be one of my top priorities," said Councilmember George Leventhal. "Montgomery County now has a coordinated and efficient system, which has been developed with our community partners to ensure that every Veteran in our County has access to the supports needed to move quickly from homelessness to permanent housing. Providing a stable home for our Veterans is simply the right thing to do for those who have sacrificed so much for our country."

County funding to house homeless Veterans was in jeopardy because of proposed cuts recommended as part of the Fiscal Year 2016 Savings Plan. The Council's Health and Human Services Committee and the Council restored \$500,000 to fund the housing resources needed as part of Montgomery's Zero 2016 Plan.

Montgomery County's Zero 2016 Plan was developed with a primary focus on the rapid exit of Veterans from homelessness to permanent, sustainable housing. This plan was developed as the result of collaborative discussions among the County's Department of Health and Human Services, family and single adult shelter providers, Veterans groups, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Supportive Services for Veterans Families and others. This group reviewed the homeless continuum of care to determine what federal, state and local resources were available and the strategies necessary to specifically address Veteran homelessness.

Achieving a "functional zero" for homeless Veterans does not mean that there will never be a Veteran experiencing homelessness, but future homeless Veterans will be housed quickly because of the systems in place and the ability to mobilize resources.

The community collaboration that has worked together to achieve this goal includes the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, Bethesda Cares, the County's Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs DC Medical Center and others.

County Cable Montgomery recently profiled one of the Veterans who received permanent housing on Veterans Day. The link to this story is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqFJ2-LJlrc&feature=youtu.be>.

HUD-VETERANS ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTED HOUSING (VASH) VOUCHERS

In 2016, Montgomery County was awarded with 12 more HUD-VASH vouchers bringing the total since 2010 to 98 vouchers.

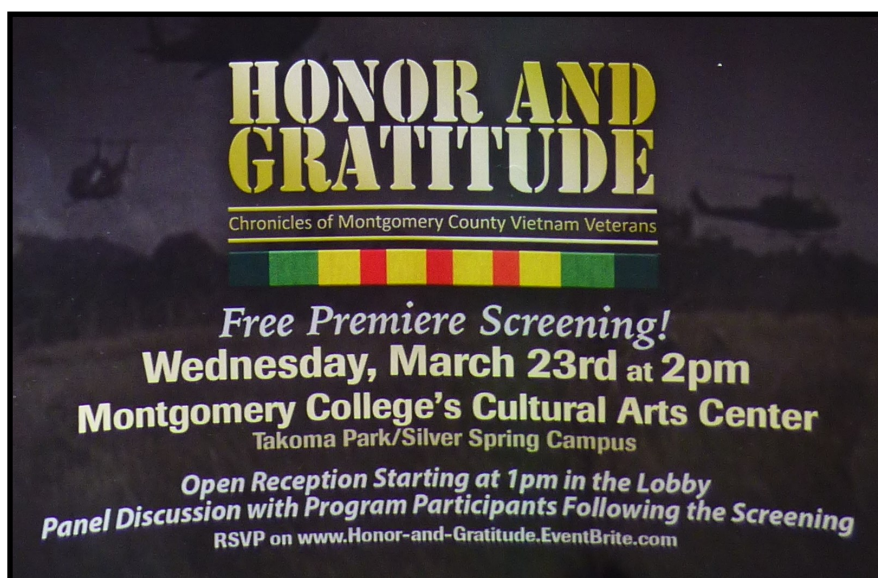
The Washington, DC VAMC has a full-time homeless outreach clinical social worker, Fatmata Kamara, who works closely with the various county and non-profit county agencies working with homeless. When a person is located who identifies as a Veteran, Fatmata meets with the person to determine if they are eligible for assistance (right type of discharge, enough time in service, etc.).

If they are eligible she completes a SPDAT which is a county wide rating survey of living conditions, mental health challenges and physical health problems. There is a score attached to each section of the SPDAT. A total score is assigned. When vouchers become available, the most critical/vulnerable, highest scoring Veteran is assigned the voucher. The VAMC homeless outreach team meets weekly and if a county has an open voucher, all chronically homeless Veterans SPDATs are reviewed and that group determines who will receive the open voucher.

The program is designed to identify 'chronically homeless' Veterans which are those who have been homeless for at least one year or experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past three years. It is not a program designed to house someone who lives with parents, lives with friends or bounces around between friends. It is for Veterans who have identified as chronically homeless based on the nationwide definition of chronic homelessness.

HUD-VASH Vouchers Awarded to Housing Opportunities Commission (2010 - 2016) 10400 Detrick Avenue, Kensington, MD 240-627-9400							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2015	2016	Total
HUD-VASH Vouchers	25	25	15	15	6	12	98

MCTV DOCUMENTARY ON VIETNAM VETERANS



Montgomery College Television (MCTV) presented the world premiere screening of its video documentary *Honor and Gratitude: Chronicles of Montgomery County Vietnam Veterans* on March 23, 2016, in the Cultural Arts Center on the College's Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus.

The documentary was produced by Emmy-award winning directors Dan Rankin (MCTV) and Barbara Grunbaum (County Cable Montgomery). The 70-minute film tells the stories of seven military Veterans from Montgomery County, including a prisoner of war, who served in Vietnam. Three of the Veterans featured are Montgomery College alumni. "The documentary features the narratives of a

prisoner of war, a nurse, a Marine, two infantrymen, an air cavalryman and a boat operator. Some were drafted; some enlisted," said Ms. Grunbaum. "Taken together, their stories paint a picture of this controversial war's impact on those who fought on the front lines, as well as what they faced when they returned home." Following the documentary, there was a panel discussion, and question and answer session, featuring Vietnam Veterans.

The film continues the Montgomery College tradition of recognizing Veterans - embodied today by their longstanding Combat2College program that provides academic and social support services for students who are Veterans. The program fosters a welcoming environment for Veterans and service members who are transitioning into college, while adapting the skills they developed from military training and combat experience.

To watch the full documentary, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3OAnvShg-0>.



From left to right: Bill Gray, Jane McCarthy, Ricky Black, Steve Campanella, Mike Walsh, Wayne Miller

Photo courtesy of Montgomery College - Pete Vidal

MCTV DOCUMENTARY ON VIETNAM VETERANS CONTINUED



From left to right: Steve Campanella, Bill Gray, Jane McCarthy, Mike Walsh, Wayne Miller



Navy Commander Everett Alvarez, Jr. (Ret.)

Commander Everett Alvarez, Jr., joined the Navy as an aviator while attending college in California. He was part of a bombing mission over North Vietnam sent in retaliation after a reported North Vietnamese attack a day earlier on two U.S. destroyers. The attack became known as the Gulf of Tonkin incident and led to the start of significant escalation of U.S. military action in Vietnam. Commander Alvarez was the first American aviator shot down over Vietnam and held prisoner for 8 1/2 years at the Hanoi Hilton.

Commander Alvarez and his wife Tammy have made Rockville, MD their home since 1976 and plan to continue to live here as they love our community. He is the Chief Executive Officer of Alvarez & Associates, LLC. They have two sons Marc and Bryan. Marc is an attorney and Vice-President of Alvarez & Associates. Bryan is a physician and Commander in the U.S. Navy and completed two tours in Iraq. Commander Alvarez and wife Tammy have two grandchildren. He and his wife serve on the committee of the Green Road Project of Walter Reed Institute for Integrative Health that provides a natural healing environment for injured service members and their families. Green Road Project:

<http://tiih.org/what-we-do/build-healthy-communities/green-road-project/>

Photos courtesy of Montgomery College - Pete Vidal

DAR COMMEMORATES VIETNAM 50TH ANNIVERSARY WITH WREATH LAYING CEREMONY

The President General, of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR), asked that chapters host an activity on March 29, 2016, along with the Department of Veterans Affairs, to mark the end of Vietnam engagement (in country). Montgomery County Daughters of the American (DAR) chapters hosted a wreath laying ceremony at the new Fallen Heroes Memorial, which was dedicated in November 2014, at the Judicial Center Annex in Rockville, MD.



Dale Boggs, DAR, gives remarks at the wreath laying



Two members of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 641 in Silver Spring lay a wreath.



From left to right: Ken Reichard, Wayne Miller, Conrad A. Bousquet, Larry Gray, Jane McCarthy, Bill Bennett, Bill Highland, Steve Campanella, Bill Gray, Stanley Miller, Roland Kauffman

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD EMPLOYMENT DATA ON HIRING OF VETERANS, DISABLED VETERANS, AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Commission on Veterans Affairs and Commission on People with Disabilities worked with the County's Office of Human Resources (OHR) to establish employment initiatives which include hiring preferences for veteran, veteran with a disability, and person with a disability and a non-competitive hiring process for persons with disabilities, which was passed into law by Montgomery County voters in 2012.

Karen Hochberg, OHR, has reported that since the hiring preferences and non-competitive hiring process were implemented approximately:

	August 30, 2015	August 30, 2016	October 20, 2016
New employees cumulatively hired	211	235	241
Non-competitive hires	16	18	21
People with disabilities	21	26	29
Veterans with disabilities	8	9	13
Veterans	159	172	178
Not identified	7	10	

A Better Bottom Line - Montgomery County Government video regarding the employment of people with disabilities and Veterans. Jonathan Pruziner served in Iraq and Afghanistan and came home to Become hired as a police officer with the Montgomery County Police Department. (YouTube):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-2A_PbxrqA (6:27 version)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWOYNkEWE5s> (11:42 version)



FY18 OPERATING BUDGET PRIORITIES

Commission on Veterans Affairs Budget Priorities FY18 Meeting with B/C/C and HHS Committee of County Council October 19, 2016

**Dan Bullis, Chairman
Randy Stone, Vice-Chairman**

1. **Funding for public outreach to Veterans/community regarding suicide prevention, sexual assault, County Firearm Safety Initiative and a Deflection Model in criminal justice system** - Substance abuse, Post-Traumatic Stress, and other mental health disorders are a significant contributor to sexual assault numbers in the military, as well as in the community at large. On the other end of the spectrum, substance abuse, PTS, and other mental health disorders are significant contributors to the relatively high suicide rates being experienced by Veterans. Consequently, the Commission supports the development and implementation of a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and for public outreach to educate and reach Veterans and the community at large about sexual assault, suicide and a Firearm Safety Initiative to ensure proper firearms storage in the home and elsewhere. Concurrently, the Commission recommends that the STEER and Sequential Intercept Model be used in the new Mental Health Court, but it can also functional independently, be used to identify Veterans and refer them to needed services. The goal of the Deflection Model project is to deflect low-risk individuals with substance use disorders (SUDs) away from the criminal justice system and directly into community-based treatment. This deflection model presents an evidence-based approach to providing individuals treatment for substance use and will have many benefits not only for the affected individuals, but also for their families and our communities, as well as Montgomery County's overburdened expensive criminal justice system. The County is moving forward with an initial smaller scale implementation that will be funded for 12 months. To ensure that all Veterans receive this model, and because it is anticipated that this model will be expensive and far beyond available resources the Commission recommends to fund \$250,000 to provide 2 staff positions to support this effort specifically to serve Veterans that have a diagnosis of substance abuse and /or mental illness/Post Traumatic Stress.
2. **Continue County funding for Ending Homelessness for Veterans** - \$500,000 per year to be able to serve those who do not qualify for Veteran Administration Supported Housing (VASH) vouchers.

ANNUAL MEETING WITH COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND COMMISSIONS (BCCS) Annual Meetings with the County Executive 2016

ATTENDANCE AND ISSUE SUBMISSION FORM

Annual Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 29, 2016
BCC Name: Commission on Veterans Affairs (CVA)
BCC Members and Staff who Plan to Attend (Please indicate if Chair or Vice Chair):
Dan Bullis, Chair; Randy Stone, Vice-Chair
Issue to be Addressed by the County Executive: (Optional)
CVA will address the need to promote the CVA's purpose: to advocate for the more than 44,000 Montgomery County veterans and their families. The CVA stands ready to recognize our County veterans and their families for their service and provide them with information about available assistance and resources. We also stand ready to help our fellow Boards, Committees and Commissions (BCC) as they interact with County veterans and give our fellow BCC guidance about how best to support our County veterans and their families.
CVA seeks to increase access in the County to health and mental health care for veterans. The County and its contractors need to encourage veterans and their families to enroll in the VA health care system. One option is to post information on County Ride On buses as to how to enroll. CVA further supports efforts to create a veterans treatment docket within the mental health or behavioral health court to guide veterans in the criminal justice system to more successful, long-term solutions.
Question to be Addressed by the County Executive: (Optional)
Question #1: What is the status of the Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Montgomery County?
Question #2: How will the County commemorate the 50 th anniversary of the end of Vietnam?
Question #3: What efforts are underway to end veteran homelessness?

VA SILVER SPRING VET CENTER SERVICES



Readjustment Counseling Services

After war, some veterans experience psychological and social distress and difficulties in readjusting to civilian life. In 1979, the Department of Veterans Affairs established Vet Centers to assist Vietnam-era veterans with such problems. Congress later expanded Vet Center services to include combat veterans of other conflicts. These services are available at Vet Centers in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands and Guam.

Services Available

- Individual counseling
- Marital and family counseling
- VA benefits assistance and referral
- Substance abuse counseling and referrals
- Primary health care for basic medical needs
- Pre-employment assistance and employment counseling
- Discharge upgrade information
- Community, social service and medical referrals
- Sexual trauma / harassment counseling (veterans of all eras)

The Vet Center also has a network of federal, state, city and community resources to help you. We will try to address any concerns or problems you bring to us.

At the Vet Center, you can expect help from professional counselors who will treat you with respect and understanding. Many of the counselors are also war veterans, so they understand your problems first hand, and have the training and skills to help solve them.

There is no charge for the assistance you receive at the Vet Center because of your sacrifices and efforts for this country. Veterans applying for assistance are asked to bring a copy of their Military Separation or Military Discharge (DD214) with them. As of September 2016 VA Vet Centers are now able to provide readjustment counseling to Veterans with dishonorable discharges.

Vet Center Combat Call Center
1-877-WAR-VETS (927-8387)

National Suicide Hot Line
1-800-273-8255 (Toll Free)

**Bereavement Counseling for
Surviving Family Members**
202-461-6530 (V)

Location and Hours of Operation

2900 Linden Lane, Suite 100
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-589-1073 (V)

Monday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday: 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Second Saturday every month: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Eligibility

War Zone Veterans - All Eras Including:

WWII

Three eligible categories

European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal

(7 Dec 1941 to 8 Nov 1945)

Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal

(7 Dec 1941 to 2 Mar 1946)

American Campaign Medal

(7 Dec 1941 to 2 Mar 1946)

American Merchant Marines in

Oceangoing Service

7 Dec 1941 to 15 August 1945

Korea

27 June 1950 to 27 July 1954

(eligible for the Korean Service Medal)

Vietnam

28 Feb 1961 to 1 May 1975

Lebanon

25 Aug 1982 to 26 Feb 1984

Grenada

23 Oct 1983 to 21 Nov 1983

Panama

20 Dec 1989 to 31 Jan 1990

Persian Gulf

2 Aug 1990 to -

Somalia

17 Sept 1992 to -

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Albania

(former Yugoslavia operations)

Global War on Terrorism/OIF/OEF/OND

11 Sept 2001 -

KEY CONTACTS FOR THE VA AND OTHER RESOURCES

Serving Together - Peer Navigation

Jennifer Watson, Peer Navigator

E-mail: peernavigator@servingtogetherproject.org

www.servingtogetherproject.org

301-738-7176 (V)

1-855-738-7176 (Toll Free)

Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Serving Together is the County's place to find all programs and services for veterans. Peer navigators work to guide military, Veterans and their families through a sometimes complicated and fragmented system of resources and information. They also work to connect the Montgomery County community with Veteran events. You can check out the calendar and more on their website. You can send calendar events to Julie Riggs, Program Director at jriggs@every-mind.org. Serving Together also has a weekly newsletter that goes out every Friday morning that includes all the posts they have shared throughout the week. Interested parties can sign up online.

Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA)

Montgomery College Service Center

240-567-5405 (V)

David Coxe, Veterans Benefits Specialist

240-567-4361 (Fax)

51 Mannakee Street, Counseling & Advising Building, Room CB 103

E-mail: vbs.dcoxe@gmail.com

Montgomery College Service Center Hours: Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. **Outreach Hours:** Mr. Coxe will be at WorkSource Montgomery (11002 Veirs Mill Road, 1st Floor, Wheaton, MD 20902) the 1st and 3rd Friday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. He will be at the Silver Spring Vet Center (2900 Linden Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910) the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Phil Munley, Director of Program Services

410-230-4444 x 6457 (V)

E-mail: pmunley@mdva.state.md.us

The MDVA Service and Benefits Program provides assistance to the men and women who served in the Uniformed Services of the United States, their dependents, and survivors in obtaining benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, State of Maryland and other programs for Veterans and their families.

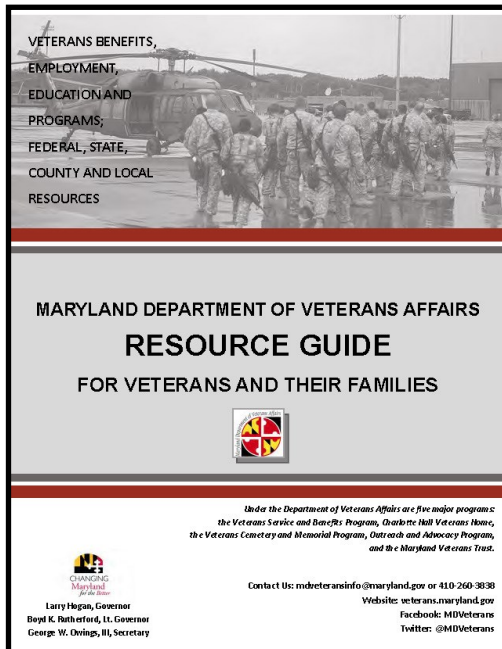
Outreach at Piccard - Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC)

1301 Piccard Drive, Room 1005, Rockville, MD 20850

VAMC provides outreach services to Veterans at the County's Crisis Center. VAMC Homeless Outreach Staff and are available for both drop in and scheduled visits. The VA is available to assist Veterans by making referrals and connecting Veterans who are eligible for VA services with the VA healthcare system. Maryland's Commitment to Veterans (MCV) also provides staff to be on-site to assist Veterans and their families with coordinating behavioral health services, including mental health and substance abuse services - either with the VA or Maryland's Public Health System; facilitate transportation to behavioral health appointments; provide information and referrals related to employment, education, housing or VA benefits; and provide outreach to educate residents, Veterans and community groups about MCV.

- Fatmata Kamara, VA Outreach Social Worker
E-mail: fatmata.kamara@va.gov, 202-256-9261 (V)
Ken Barnum, VA Outreach Social Worker
E-mail: kenneth.barnum@va.gov
Office Hours: Monday, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
(Staff alternate Mondays)
- Melissa Barber, Regional Resource Coordinator,
Maryland's Commitment to Veterans
E-mail: mbarber.mcv@gmail.com, 410-725-9971 (V)
Winston Smith, Outreach Specialist, U.S. Vets,
202-734-8298 (V)
Clayton McGee, Senior Outreach Specialist, U.S. Vets,
202-573-4961 (V)
Office Hours: Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Staff alternate Thursdays)
- Jennifer Watson, Peer Navigator, Serving Together
E-mail: peernavigator@servingtogetherproject.org,
301-738-7176 (V)
Office Hours: Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



The **Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) Resource Guide for Veterans and their Families** is designed to educate Veterans and their families, as well as those who serve them, on the benefits to which they may be entitled as a result of their military service. This comprehensive guide includes Federal, state, county and local resources on compensation and pension, benefits for Veterans with service-connected disabilities, services for combat Veterans, education, scholarships and grants, employment, housing, Maryland Homefront - The Veterans and Military Family Mortgage Program, VA home loans, homelessness, legal services, State tax exemptions, cemetery benefits, healthcare, and assisted living and nursing home care programs.

To view the guide online, please visit:

<http://veterans.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/05/MDVAResourceGuide.pdf>

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of the Secretary: 410-260-3838

Service and Benefits Program: 1-800-446-4926 x 6450

Charlotte Hall Veterans Home: 301-884-8171

Cemetery and Memorial Program: 410-923-6981

Outreach and Advocacy Program: 410-260-3842

Maryland Veterans Trust: 410-974-2399

United States Department of Veterans Affairs

Healthcare Eligibility and Enrollment:

Central Maryland/Eastern Shore: 1-800-463-6295 x 7324

Western Maryland: 304-263-0811 x 3758

Southern Maryland/Montgomery/Prince Georges:

202-745-8251

Medical Centers:

Baltimore: 410-605-7000

Perry Point: 410-642-2411

Loch Raven: 410-605-7000

Martinsburg, WVA: 304-263-0811

Washington, DC: 202-745-8000

Hotlines:

The Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255, press 1

Call Center for Homeless Veterans: 1-877-424-3838

Call Center for Women Veterans: 1-855-829-6636

Vet Center Combat Call Center: 1-877-WAR-VETS

VA Coaching Into Care: 1-888-823-7458

VA Caregiver Support: 1-855-260-3274

Maryland's Commitment to Veterans: 1-877-770-4801

Maryland Access Point: 1-844-627-5465

Maryland Department of Human Resources:

1-800-332-6347

Maryland Health Connection:

1-855-642-8572

VA Community Resource and Referral Center

Washington, DC: 202-636-7660

Baltimore: 410-637-3246

PROJECTED NUMBER OF VETERANS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

The U.S. Census Bureau, 2015, estimates that there are approximately **41,929 veterans living in Montgomery County, Maryland**. According to a 2015 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, 7.6% of Americans self-reported as being a veteran. The Census Bureau defines as veteran as men and women who have served (even for a short time), but are not currently serving, on active duty in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or the Coast Guard, or who served in the U.S. Merchant Marine during World War II. People who served in the National Guard or Reserves are classified as veterans only if they were ever called or ordered to active duty, not counting the 4 to 6 months for initial training or yearly summer camps. All other civilians are classified as nonveterans.

Veteran Population of Montgomery County, MD - 2015		
Subject	Veterans	Total
Civilian Population 18 years and over	41,929 (5.3%)	793,175
Period of Service	Veterans	% of 41,929
Gulf War II (9/2001 or later) veterans	9,942	23.7%
Gulf War I (8/1990 to 8/2001) veterans	8,861	21.1%
Vietnam era veterans	13,067	31.2%
Korean War veterans	3,981	9.5%
World War II veterans	3,125	7.4%
Gender	Veterans	% of 41,929
Male	37,255	88.8%
Female	4,674	11.2%
Age	Veterans	% of 41,929
18 to 34 years	4,285	10.2%
35 to 54 years	10,223	24.4%
55 to 64 years	6,306	15.0%
65 to 74 years	9,225	22.0%
75 years and older	11,890	28.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015

Montgomery County, MD Veteran Demographics - By City (2010 - 2014)

United States Census QuickFacts only includes data for incorporated places with a population of 5,000 or greater.

Ashton-Sandy Spring	351
Aspen Hill	2,267
Bethesda	3,238
Burtonsville	306
Chevy Chase	510
Clarksburg	586
Damascus	913
Darnestown	279
Four Corners	479
Gaithersburg	2,793

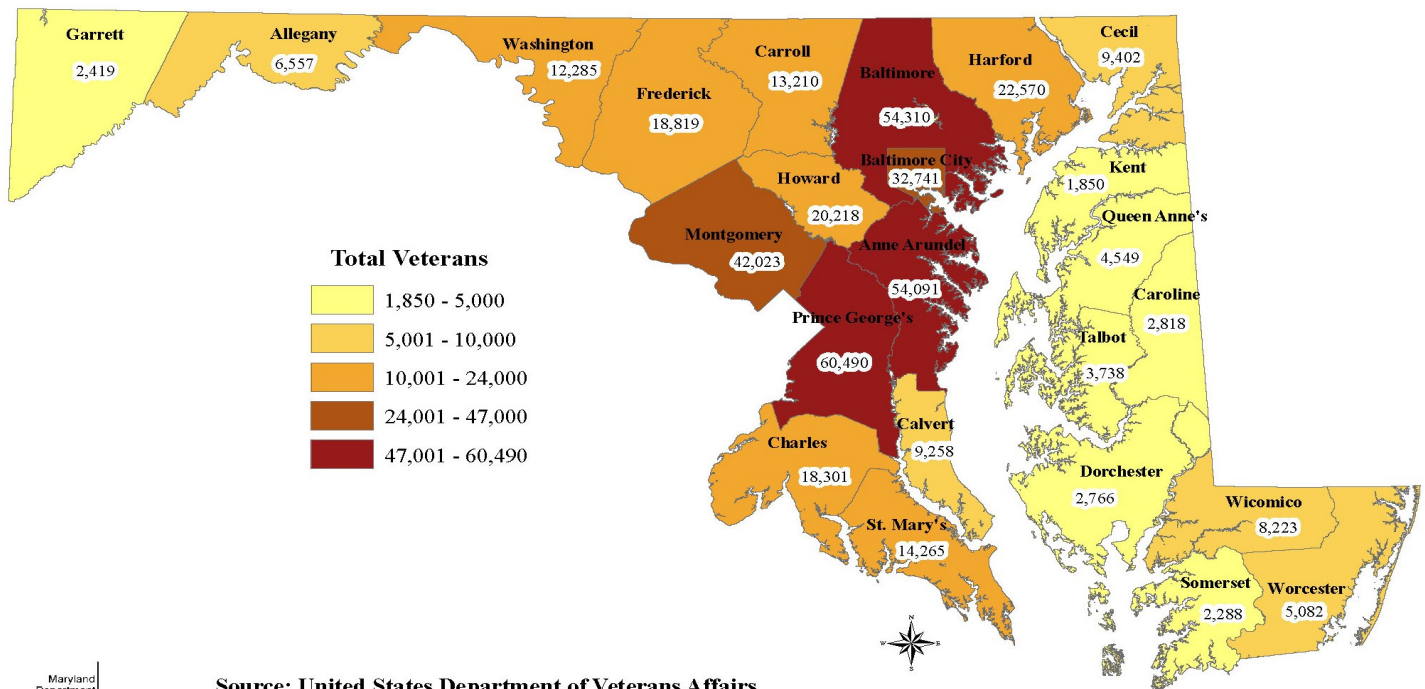
Germantown	3,165
Glenmont	428
Kemp Mill	590
Poolesville	210
Layhill	259
Leisure World	1,611
Montgomery Village	1,426
North Bethesda	2,553
North Kensington	541
North Potomac	827

Olney	1,712
Poolesville	210
Potomac	2,284
Rockville	3,047
Silver Spring	2,930
South Kensington	477
Takoma Park	615
Travilah	492
Wheaton	2,075

Source: U.S. Census QuickFacts 2010 - 2014

PROJECTED NUMBER OF VETERANS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

Project Number of Veterans in Maryland for 2016: 422,282



Source: United States Department of Veterans Affairs
Map prepared for the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
by the Maryland Department of Planning

HOW MANY UNIFORMED SERVICES RETIREES LIVE IN THE COUNTY?

Colonel Harvey T. Kaplan, U.S. Army (Ret.) Vice President, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) MD, reports that in Montgomery County, the number of Uniformed Services retirees from all 7 of our Uniformed Services can be estimated from the "yardstick" we have been using for the entire State of Maryland for many years. It is approximately 1/11 of the Veteran population. If you wish to accept the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs figures, then divide your total by 11. If I had to come up with a good estimate on the spot, I'd say use the figure 3,900 for the number of retirees in Montgomery County. [Kindly note that there is not consensus on the VA figures, which are based on algorithm rather than an accurate count at predetermined intervals.]

There are seven (7) Uniformed Services and that they need to be spelled out in any legislation--to avoid inadvertently omitting any group that should be included: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Public Health Service (USPHS Commissioned Corps), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Commissioned Corps. The State of Maryland's General Assembly has had to correct such omissions in recent past legislation. Both the USPHS Commissioned Corps and the NOAA Commissioned Corps are headquartered in Montgomery County.

Captain Dave Peterson, NOAA (Ret), President, Montgomery County Chapter, MOAA, Commissioner, Maryland Veterans Commission reports that each year he receives a large listing from MOAA's national headquarters in Alexandria, which provides the names of MOAA members living in Montgomery County who are not also chapter members. The 2016 listing has 1837 names of retired officers from the seven uniformed services who live in Montgomery County. To that you can add about 100 members of their chapter, so in round numbers, there are 2000 retired officers in the County. The Commission will be contacting the Retired Enlisted Association to determine if they have a similar kind of listing, which would at least give a more complete picture of retired service members in our county.

2015 - 2016 YEAR IN REVIEW

To provide greater access to health care, we are pleased that the VA Medical Center in D.C., will be establishing a Community Based Outpatient Clinic in the County in 2017. After six years of advocating for a Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), the Commission was proud to participate in the Golden Hammer event marking the build out of this clinic. The Commission along with Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett was joined by County, State, and Federal officials for the official ceremony to redevelop space for a new County CBOC. The ceremony was held Monday, September 19, 2016 at 15810 Gaither Drive in Gaithersburg where the clinic will be located. It will be the first Department of Veterans Affairs community clinic in Montgomery County offering health care services to the more than 42,000 Veterans living in the area. The newly renovated building space will offer 11,600 square feet with room for primary-care and mental-health clinics as well as space for tele-health, patient education, hearing aid fittings and specialty care.

The Commission continues to advocate to increase access in the County to health/mental health care for Veterans. The County and its contractors need to encourage Veterans and their families to enroll them in VA Health Benefits. Recent studies indicate that 1 out of 5 Veterans returning from Iraq or Afghanistan have some type of mental health issue from Traumatic Brain Injury to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

There are plans underway for a Mental Health Court and the Commission advocated that a Veterans docket be included. The Commission is very interested in providing support/mentoring to incarcerated Veterans and their families. The Commission recommends that the STEER and Sequential Intercept Model be used in the new Mental Health Court, but it can also function independently, be used to identify Veterans and refer them to needed services. The goal of the Deflection Model project is to deflect low-risk individuals with substance use disorders (SUDs) away from the criminal justice system and directly into community-based treatment. This deflection model presents an evidence-based approach to providing individuals treatment for substance use and will have many benefits not only for the affected individuals, but also for their families and our communities, as well as Montgomery County's overburdened expensive criminal justice system. The County is moving forward with an initial smaller scale implementation that will be funded for 12 months.

The Commission advocated with the Office of Public Information to establish a County Cable talk show called Homefront. Michael Subin has served as host.

As part of this year's activities, the Commission worked with Neil Greenberger and Merlyn Reineke of Montgomery Community Media to plan the County's first Salute to Vietnam Veterans which was held on October 24, 2015 at the Universities of Shady Grove. Bob Schieffer, formerly with Face the Nation, was our MC. Over 800 people attended. Five of our living POW's from the Vietnam War attended.

The Commission advocated with the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) to hire a full time Veterans Benefits Specialist now located at Montgomery College. The MDVA Service and Benefits Program provides assistance to the men and women who served in the Uniformed Services of the United States, their dependents, and survivors in obtaining benefits from the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Dept. of Defense, State of Maryland and other programs for Veterans and their families.

2015 - 2016 YEAR IN REVIEW

The Commission supports the work of Serving Together, which is a collection of local community-based resources for Veterans, service members and their families. Its goal is to provide clear guidance on how to access the care and support Veterans need. This includes support during transition to the civilian world and job placement. Website:

www.servingtogetherproject.org

The Veterans Education Partnership, which was established by the Commission, increases outreach to the general Veteran population regarding programs and services including the Montgomery College Combat to College Program, Universities at Shady Grove Veterans Services and the University of Maryland Terp Vets.

Commission continues its fight against Veteran homelessness through its support of Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers. The Commission supported the Zero 16 Campaign to End Veteran Homelessness. As part of the County's Fiscal Year 2016 budget, the County Council approved an appropriation in the amount of \$500,000 to provide housing and supportive services to functionally end Veteran homelessness in the County. The funding is reoccurring every year and is available to Veterans who have received less than an honorable discharge and are therefore not eligible for VA programs. The County has received 98 VASH vouchers over the last six years, each worth \$13,122 or \$1.1 M per year in housing subsidies.

The Commission supports the importance of the Silver Spring Vet Center. Operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Vet Centers provide free readjustment counseling to combat Veterans and their families to help with the transition from military to civilian life. Counseling can help with issues such as employment assessment, PTSD, sexual trauma, substance abuse, and screening and referral for medical issues such as traumatic brain injuries and depression. The Silver Spring Vet Center's telephone number is 301-589-1073 and is located at 2900 Linden Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

The Commission continually seeks job placement resources for Veterans and their families. It supports Bob Pelletier and the team at Montgomery Works -Partner of the American Job Center Networks and Tony Cancelosi of Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind for their work on Veteran hiring. The Commission advocated with the County and the Office of Human Resources for the employment initiatives for disabled Veterans and Veterans that led to the hiring of 191 Veterans of which 13 have a disability.

The Commission worked the Military Officers of America Association (MOAA) to implement a program called Transition Support to Veterans in Montgomery County Business and Networking Group (BANG) –The Military Officers Association of America Transition Group for Northern VA and Southern MD is concerned that military service members transitioning back into civilian life are unprepared when seeking employment. The Northern Virginia (NOVA) Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Business and Networking Group (BANG) was created in 1996. BANG is a monthly program that provides business and networking assistance. Each month an employer is invited to speak about their company and offers assistance as well as accepting resumes. In addition BANG sends out a weekly e-mail broadcast that provides employment opportunities, Veterans' updates, and job fair announcements. The group is open to non-military job seekers and networkers. The Montgomery County Chapter of the MOAA started BANG in Montgomery County and held its first meeting with students at Montgomery College on November 3, 2015. The Commission endorsed and supports this project of the Montgomery County MOAA of creating BANG in the County.

The Commission will continue its satellite meeting program whereby the Commission holds monthly meetings at different locations throughout the County at least once a year. The Commission's November 2015 meeting was held at Leisure World, which will give Leisure World Veterans and their families an opportunity to directly address the Commission and learn more about County and State support.

The Veterans Tribute Concert was held on November 3, 2015 at the Silver Spring Civic Building at Veterans Plaza. Dan Bullis, Randy Stone, and Mike Subin were featured speakers and participants enjoyed the music of The 19th Street Band as they honored the military service of County Veterans and their families.

CONNECT WITH THE COMMISSION



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www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcg/esubscribe.html



Sign up for emergency alerts from Alert Montgomery! Alert Montgomery is the official emergency communications service for Montgomery County, MD. During a major crisis, emergency or severe weather event, Montgomery County officials can send event updates, warnings and instructions directly to you on any of your devices. Sign up at <https://alert.montgomerycountymd.gov>.

COMMISSION PRESENTATIONS FOR 2015 - 2016

November, 2015: **Satellite Meeting at Leisure World**

VA Benefits for You & Your Spouse - Phil Munley, Director, Veterans Service Program, Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

December, 2015: **Introduction to the Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training, Inc. (MCVET), Baltimore, MD** - Catherine O'Donovan, Director or Development, MCVET, and Sandi Dutton, President of the Board, MVCET

January, 2016: **Celebrating Functionally Ending Veteran Homelessness** - The Honorable George Leventhal, Councilmember, Montgomery County Council

Serving Veterans in the Court System - Michael Subin, Esq., Special Assistant to County Executive, and Robert Green, Director of Department of Correction and Rehabilitation (DOCR)

February, 2016: **Veterans Choice Program - U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs** - Jereme Whiteman, Chief of Business Office, DC VA Medical Center

Joining Forces Project, Maryland Legal Aid - Swapna Yeluri

March, 2016: **Incarcerated Veterans Pre-Release and Reentry Services** - Gale Starkey, Deputy Warden, Inmate Services, Detention Services Division (MCDOCR), and Shawn Huntley, Vice President of Community Services, WorkSource Montgomery

April, 2016: **Operation Second Change** - Cindy McGrew, President and Founder

Serving Veterans in the Mental Health Court - Raymond Crowel, Psy.D., Chief, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services, Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services

May, 2016: **Planning for Community Outreach to Veterans** - Ohene Gyapong, Deputy Director, Montgomery County Office of Public Information

MyVA Communities and Capital Network Community Engagement Board - Chakakhon Lea, MS, FAC-PM, Department of Veterans Affairs, Veteran Experience Office, North Atlantic District

June, 2016: **Team River Runner (TRR)** - Joe Mornini, Executive Director and Co-Founder; Alex Nielson, Veteran and TRR Participant

September, 2016 **Annual Strategic Planning Meeting** - Held offsite at American Legion Post 41, Silver Spring, MD

October, 2016 **Overview of Department of Defense (DoD) Suicide Prevention Efforts** - Jackie Garrick, Department of Defense

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS



**County Executive
Isiah Leggett**

The **County Executive** can be reached at:

Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850
240-777-0311 (V)
240-773-3556 (TTY)
ocemail@montgomerycountymd.gov



Montgomery County Council

The **County Council** can be reached at:

Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850
240-777-7900 (V)
240-777-7914 (TTY)
240-777-7888 (FAX)
county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov

*Seated, left to right: Sidney Katz, Craig Rice, Hans Riemer and George Leventhal.
Standing: Marc Elrich, Roger Berliner, Nancy Floreen, Nancy Navarro and Tom Hucker.*

**Isiah Leggett, County Executive
Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Commission on Veterans Affairs
401 Hungerford Drive, 4th floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850
240-777-1246 (V) or via MD Relay 711**

**Language translation and alternative formats of this report are available upon request.
For additional information on the Commission, please call the telephone numbers or write to the
address listed above or e-mail via the contact information listed below.**

*Montgomery County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in
employment or in the admission or access to its programs or services.*

2015 - 2016 Annual Report Prepared By:

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